



Southwest Coastal Louisiana Project

Frequently Asked Questions



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be continuously updated throughout the life of the project to communicate important Project information. It will be available at the project website, located at the following address:

<https://cims.coastal.louisiana.gov/outreach/Projects/SWCoastal>

Project Overview

1. What is the geographic footprint of the Southwest Coastal Louisiana Project?

The Project contains structures located in Calcasieu, Cameron, and Vermilion parishes in Louisiana. Within the three parishes, structures identified are located within the 0-25 year flood plain based on the predicted 2075 100-year base flood elevation.

2. What phase is the Project in?

The Project is currently in the Preconstruction, Engineering and Design (PED) Phase. The Project received Federal funding for PED in late 2018. The project is awaiting federal construction funding.

The feasibility study was completed in 2015, signed by the Chief of Engineers on July 29, 2016, and was authorized for construction in the Water Infrastructure Improvements of the Nation Act (WIIN Act) of 2016.

3. What agencies are funding proponents of the Project?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the responsible Federal agency. The Coastal Protection Restoration and Authority (CPRA) is the non-Federal sponsor. The Project is currently in the Preconstruction Engineering and Design phase, which is funded 65/35 percent Federal/non-Federal. The PED phase is the start of project implementation, and details for the engineering and design of a project are performed during this phase.

For this Project, the PED phase includes verifying preliminarily eligible structures identified in the Final Feasibility Report and contacting identified structure owners to begin site investigations prior to construction.

Construction will be funded 65/35 percent by Corps and the CRPA. There are no construction funds available at this time.

4. How much funding is available for the Project?

The available funding of \$1.196 million was received for PED efforts. Federal funding for construction has not been received. The estimated cost for the nonstructural coastal storm damage risk reduction portion of the Project was estimated to cost \$906 million in 2016.

5. How long will implementation of the Project take?

It is anticipated that the Project would be implemented over 20 years. Project implementation is dependent on Federal and non-Federal construction funding availability.

6. How will structures be prioritized for construction?

The prioritization strategy for this first phase of implementation involved overlaying the 2017 CPRA Master Plan non-structure project areas onto the preliminary eligible structures identified in the Southwest Coastal Louisiana Final Feasibility Report to identify structures in both groups. Using that subset of structures, we then followed the prioritization strategy outlined in the 2017 CPRA Master Plan. The priority list of structures for the first phase of implementation was developed based on the following: (1) properties that are owner occupied/primary residences (homes), (2) household properties with the highest predicted flood depths (greater than 5 feet); (3) properties contiguous to one another (or that complete an area of contiguous mitigation) and; (4) structures benefiting low to moderate-income communities. The strategy for structure prioritization may be modified in future years as additional PED and/or construction funding becomes available.

7. Is the Project voluntary?

Yes, the Project is 100% voluntary. No structure owner will be required to participate.

8. How much will the Project cost for each structure owner?

The cost of elevating the structure will be cost shared between the Corps and CPRA. The cost of elevating a residential structure will not require a monetary contribution from the structure owner; however, the structure owner may incur some costs. Examples of these costs include those associated with bringing the structure up to code and or any work that the structure owner would like performed that is above and beyond the essential features of elevation or raising the structure.

9. What does duplication of benefits mean?

According to federal law, this Project cannot pay for repairs that were paid for by a different source; this is a duplication of benefit. Verification of benefits is the process used to verify the sources of aid provided in response to prior events.

10. I have received disaster assistance for the structure, am I still eligible to participate in this Project?

Receipt of previous disaster funding to elevate your structure would remove your structure from Project eligibility.

Structure Specific Questions

1. What structures are eligible for the Project?

The Feasibility Study evaluated structures in Calcasieu, Cameron, and Vermilion parishes in Louisiana in the 0-25 year flood plain based on the predicted 2075 100-year base flood elevation. The Final Feasibility Report identified 3,462 residential structures, 342 non-residential buildings and 157 warehouses that are preliminary eligible.

2. What if my structure was identified as preliminarily eligible in the Feasibility Report?

If your structure was identified as potentially eligible in the Feasibility Report, you should have been contacted via letter of your potential eligibility, with additional information on the next steps and process. The Project team will be hosting several public informational meetings throughout the Parishes to share information with identified structure owners.

3. When and where are the first public meetings being held?

- **Monday, June 17 – Lake Charles** (Calcasieu Parish) 6pm, Lake Charles Civic Center
Lake Charles Civic Center 900 Lakeshore Dr, Lake Charles, LA 70601
- **Tuesday, June 18 – Sulphur** (Calcasieu Parish) 6 pm, West Cal Arena and Event Center
West Cal Arena and Event Center 401 Arena Road Sulphur, LA 70665
- **Tuesday, June 25 – Cameron** (Cameron Parish) 6pm, Cameron Policy Jury Office
Cameron Parish Police Jury West Annex 148 Smith Circle Cameron, LA 70631
- **Wednesday, June 26** - Abbeville (Vermilion Parish) 6pm, Abbeville High School
Abbeville High School 1305 Wildcat Dr, Abbeville, LA 70510
- **Thursday, June 27** – Gueydan (Vermilion Parish) 6pm, Gueydan High School
Gueydan High School 901 Main St, Gueydan, LA 70542

Additional meetings in the future may be held as requested or determined necessary.

4. What if my structure was not identified as preliminarily eligible in the Feasibility Report?

Only structures identified in the Final Feasibility Report will be eligible to participate in the Project. No additional structures can be included in the Project without further Congressional action.

5. I received a letter in the mail. Now what?

Letters were sent to all structures identified as preliminarily eligible in the Feasibility Report. Structure owners have been invited to a series of public meetings to discuss the Project. We invite all structure owners to attend a meeting in their area to learn about the Project, register for the Project and get additional information on the Project schedule and next steps.

The public meetings are the first step in the process. A priority list of approximately 110 structures have been identified. These structures are the lowest lying structures in low-to moderate-income areas. These structures will be the first structures to be elevated when funding for construction becomes available.

We ask that structure owners that are interested in the Project complete out a Structure Owner Registration Form (available from the project website <https://cims.coastal.louisiana.gov/outreach/Projects/SWCoastal>) and attend a public meeting or contact a project manager to learn more about the Project. Elevation of structures will be dependent on future funding.

6. When will construction start?

To date, funding for construction hasn't been received. The Project is anticipated to be implemented over 20 years and structures will be elevated as funding becomes available.

7. What type of flood proofing measures will be considered for my structure?

The primary measure that will be considered is elevation for residential structures, dry flood proofing of non-residential structures (excluding large warehouses), and localized storm surge reduction barriers (berms) of non-residential warehouse structures. The exact method will be determined once a professional engineer evaluates the structure.

8. Will you buy out my structure?

No, buyouts and relocations are not considered for this Project.

9. What are the design considerations for elevating residential structures?

Residential structures will be evaluated to verify the ability of the structure to withstand the raising/elevation. If it is determined that the structure is able to withstand elevation, a professional engineer will develop a plan to elevate the structure. Typical structure raising methods used throughout the Louisiana coast will be considered, and each structure will be individually evaluated to determine the most reasonable and cost effective method.

10. What type of improvements will be done? What if I want additional work done beyond what the Project will cover?

The elevation completed as part of the Project will be performed in accordance with industry standards. If the structure owner would like work done that is not an eligible Project cost, the structure owner may work with the contractor to determine what type of work and costs that could be performed. All work done outside of the Project will be the sole responsibility of the structure owner.

11. Why does the structure need an inspection?

The purpose of the inspection is to determine the structural soundness (ability of the structure to withstand the raising/elevation) and determine if there are any required repairs needed prior to the structure being elevated.

12. Do I have to pay for the inspection?

No, the cost of the inspection and all site surveys are covered by the Project.

13. What if the inspection reveals items that need to be remedied prior to construction?

If the inspection reveals any items that need to be repaired, the structure owner will be required to make the repairs before the Project can elevate the structure.

14. What is a Right-of-Entry and why must a sign it?

A Right-of-Entry is an agreement that states that you are allowing the Corps, CPRA, and its contractors (i.e. inspector) to access your home, property, or structure. Without this form the inspection and site surveys cannot occur and your structure cannot be elevated.

15. What are eligible costs to be cost shared as part of the Project?

Eligible costs are:

- Elevation of the structure;
- Raising the roof and extending the walls of a side structure attached to the main structure (i.e., garage); raising mechanical equipment (i.e., air conditioner, furnace, water heater, electrical panel, fuel storage, valves, or meters);
- Connecting, disconnecting, and extending utility connections for electrical power, fuel, incoming potable water, wastewater discharge;
- Meeting access requirements of applicable building codes (i.e., stairs with landings, guardrails);
- Creating large vent openings in the foundation and walls to meet requirements for floodwater entry and exit;
- In instances where special access improvement (i.e., elevators, lifts, ramps, etc.) may be required (i.e., in the case of physically handicapped or elderly homeowners or occupants) special handicapped access can be considered an eligible improvement when a medical professional/DMV documentation is provided. Multiple access points may also be eligible where necessary to meet state or local building code compliance;
- Removal of any trees which restrict the elevation of a structure;
- Site grading and site restoration including restoring landscaping to its preconstruction condition;
- For historic structures that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, costs associated with maintaining the historic designation as determined by the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (including such costs so as to preserve the historic façade and character of the building whether through

exterior structural modifications, landscaping, lighting, paint, disguising and/or blending of the nonstructural measure with the building, etc.);

- Temporary site protection measures during site work;
- Allowable relocation assistance funds for displaced tenant in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs of 1970, Public Law 91-646, 84 Stat. 1984 (42 U.S.C. 4601), as amended by the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, Title IV of Public Law 100-17, 101 Stat. 246-256. Relocation assistance for tenants may include, among other thing, advisory services, differential housing payments, and reimbursement of costs of moving personal property, rental assistance to supplement the costs of leasing a comparable replacement dwelling, or down payment assistance to purchase a replacement dwelling. Landowners whose properties are voluntarily elevated will not be eligible for benefits in accordance with URA; however, tenants of these structures may be eligible for these benefits.

16. What are non-eligible costs that will not be cost shared as part of the Project?

The costs that exceed that which is necessary to safely elevate and or floodproof a structure are deemed ineligible costs and any such costs remain the sole responsibility of the property owner. Ineligible costs are:

- Any structural and system repair due to existing deficiencies;
- Modifications or improvements to a septic system except for extension of lines from the raised structure to the existing system;
- Cost for elevation about the identified BFE;
- Modifications to structures that are not attached to the eligible structure;
- Modifications to tubs, pools, spas, hot tubs, and related structures or accessories;
- Modifications to decks and patios not connected to or immediately adjacent to the structure except for modifications that are expressly required by building codes (i.e. stairways and landing modifications);
- The proper remediation, removal and disposal of environmental contaminants including but not limited to HTRW, asbestos, and asbestos-containing materials in damaged or friable form;
- Costs associated with brining a non-conforming structure into compliance with current building code, housing code, and/or other applicable codes;
- Costs associated with special access improvement (i.e., elevators, lifts, ramps, etc.) that are not deemed eligible; and improvements to structures not considered the primary residence (i.e., detached garage, shed and/or barns).

17. What surveys and investigations will be required on my property?

There are several surveys that will be required before construction can occur. The surveys include: a first floor elevation survey, a structural condition assessment, environmental resources survey, phase 1 environmental site assessment, and a cultural resources & historic buildings survey. A description of each survey is below.

First Floor Elevation

A survey crew, under the direction of a Louisiana licensed Professional Surveyor, will enter the property to obtain first floor elevations and other information required by FEMA form OMB No. 1660-0008 to produce an Elevation Certificate for the structure. In addition to the first floor elevation, spot elevations at each exterior egress door will be measured as well as spot elevations at adjacent grade. Other information for the FEMA documentation includes, but is not limited to, general building description, flood zone determination, identifying the existence or absence of a garage, and photographs of the building exterior. The first floor elevation survey is necessary to confirm eligibility to Project participation.

Building Condition Assessment

A Corps representative will enter the property to perform visual observations on the physical condition(s) of the exterior and interior of the structure. Observations and assessments of the building's foundation, walls, roof, and overall structural integrity will be performed. No invasive actions will be performed. Operability of the exterior egress doors and non-cosmetic windows will be exhibited by the structure owner or tenant. The structure owner or tenant will remove any obstructions to any features the Corps representative needs to assess. A plumbing system assessment will not be performed. However, any plumbing abnormalities or conditions that would affect the elevation of the structure will be noted. An electrical system assessment will be minimal. However, any electrical abnormalities or conditions that would affect the lifting of the structure will be noted. The building condition assessment is necessary to confirm eligibility to Project participation.

Environmental Resources

In order to comply with requirements of the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, Clean Water Act, and other applicable laws and regulations, properties may need to be surveyed to determine the presence/absence of federally protected threatened or endangered species, colonial nesting water birds, bald eagles, waters of the U.S., and wetlands. Surveys would be conducted through existing database searches and field observations and would not likely require direct access to the property.

Impacts to colonial nesting water birds and bald eagles are not anticipated. However, the presence of colonial nesting water birds or bald eagles may require implementation of construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid and minimize impacts. BMPs may include minimum construction buffer distances from nest sites and seasonal construction limitations.

Impacts to threatened or endangered species are not anticipated. However, the presence of threatened or endangered species would render a property ineligible to participate in the project. Project-related wetland impacts or placement of fill in waters of the U.S. would also render a property ineligible to participate in the Project.

Project activities would be coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is a report prepared for a real estate holding which identifies potential or existing environmental contamination liabilities. The analysis, often called an ESA, typically addresses both the underlying land as well as physical improvements to the property. The analysis typically includes a review of available records, a property inspection, interviews with current owners/occupants, and preparation of a report. The contractor would need access to the property to visually inspect for signs of environmental contamination. The national standard for this process requires that access to fields, grounds, and buildings be granted. It would be necessary to enter all structures on the property. The contractor would perform a visual inspection, taking particular note of the date the structure was built. Structures built after 1973 should not have asbestos and structures built after 1978 should not have lead-based paint. Ditches and drainages were used routinely as disposal areas until the 1960s and 1970s so those may need to be inspected as well. These visual inspections, in conjunction with historical data searches and personal interviews with property owners, form the basis for any potential recommendation for future, more intrusive investigations (Phase 2 ESAs). For example, if during the course of an interview or review of historical documents it is revealed that an underground storage tank exists on the property, then the Phase 1 report may recommend additional investigations to determine if any contamination exists and to what degree. During a Phase 1 ESA, soil samples are not collected.

Cultural Resources & Historic Buildings Survey

Archeologist will walk over the area to look for archeological sites visible on the ground surface. Architectural historians will visit each structure to evaluate if the structure are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The architectural historian will interview the structure owner in regard to the various buildings' ages and history. In order to be eligible, the building or structure must be 50 years old or older, must retain its historic integrity (aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association), and must meet one of more of the National Register eligibility criteria: Criterion A – association with significant historic events; Criterion B – association with historically significant persons; Criterion C – its architecture has the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or is the work of a master architect, or possesses high artistic values, or is a representative example of a historically-important but architecturally nondistinctive building or structure or related group; and, Criterion D – has the potential to provide important information on a region's history or prehistory. The significance may be on a local, regional, state or national level. If an eligible building or structure will be directly impacted by the Project either through construction or operation, the adverse effects will need to be mitigated prior to building or structure relocation or demolition and/or Project construction in that area. These surveys are needed to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and its implementing regulation, 36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties.

Residential Construction Questions (funding for construction has not been acquired)

18. Who will perform the work on/at/to my structure?

The Corps and CPRA will contract with one or more licensed and bonded construction firms to complete the structure elevation. The Corps and/or CPRA representatives may be present periodically during construction to perform quality assurance reviews.

19. What portion of the elevation will I be responsible for?

The Federal government and CPRA will cost share the cost of the structure being elevated. The structure owner will have little to no responsibility for the elevation. If preexisting issues are identified through the previously mentioned surveys, the structure owner will be responsible for addressing those issues prior to the structure being elevated.

20. Who is responsible for covering the costs of secondary housing if I'm required to leave my home during the elevation?

The Project will cover the cost of elevating the structure and associated work. Unfortunately, if you are required to leave the property and you are the owner of the structure, it will be your responsibility to cover any secondary living expenses.